

DRAFT

## **Otis Forest Reserve**

### **Draft Proposal**

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Please send comments on this proposal by November 1, 2005 to:

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## **Overview of Natural Resources within the proposed Otis Forest Reserve:**

The proposed reserve is located in the towns of Becket, Blanford, and Otis in the southern Berkshires. It includes the Otis State Forest and portions of the Farmington River Wildlife Management Area and Chester-Blanford State Forest. The proposed reserve offers opportunities for hiking, snowshoeing, fishing and hunting and contains sections of the historic Knox Trail.

The proposed Otis Forest Reserve received the highest biodiversity rating among the proposed forest reserves within its ecological land unit (areas with similar elevation and geology that likely have very similar ecological characteristics) using the eleven biodiversity criteria recommended to EOEA by experts from outside and within state government (see description of the biodiversity rating above). The proposed Otis Reserve rated highly for percentage of riparian and wetland forest, percentage of forest cover within ten kilometers of the proposed reserve, percentage of “primary” forest (areas never cleared for agriculture), percentage of interior forest and percentage of protected open space within ten kilometers of the proposed reserve.